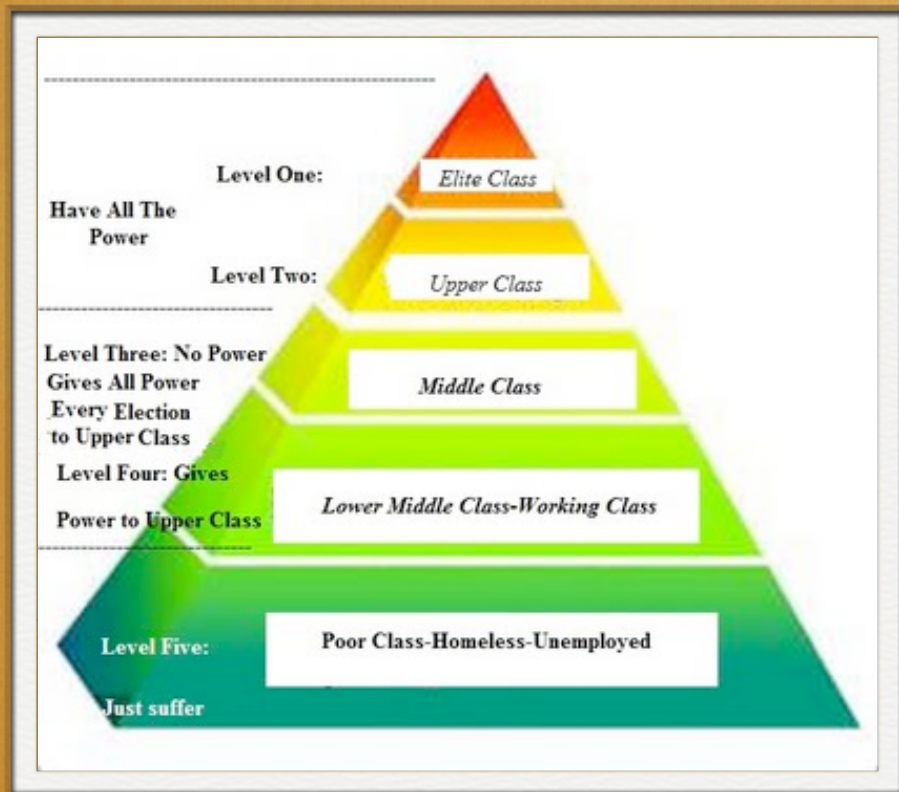


# INTRODUCTION TO U.S. SOCIAL CLASS AND STRUCTURE THE LAST TABOO!



# PEOPLE LIKE US





# SOCIAL CLASS

- WEBER - A LARGE GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO RANK CLOSE TO ONE ANOTHER IN PROPERTY, PRESTIGE, AND POWER
- MARX - ONE OF TWO GROUPS: CAPITALISTS WHO OWN THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION OR WORKERS WHO SELL THEIR LABOR

# SOCIAL CLASS

- LARGE #'S OF PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR INCOME, EDUCATION, JOBS, COMPARABLE IN PRESTIGE, STATUS, AND POWER IN SOCIETY
- VARIES BY COUNTRY, SOMETIMES REGION, MAYBE BE CHANGEABLE

**The U.S. Social Class Ladder**

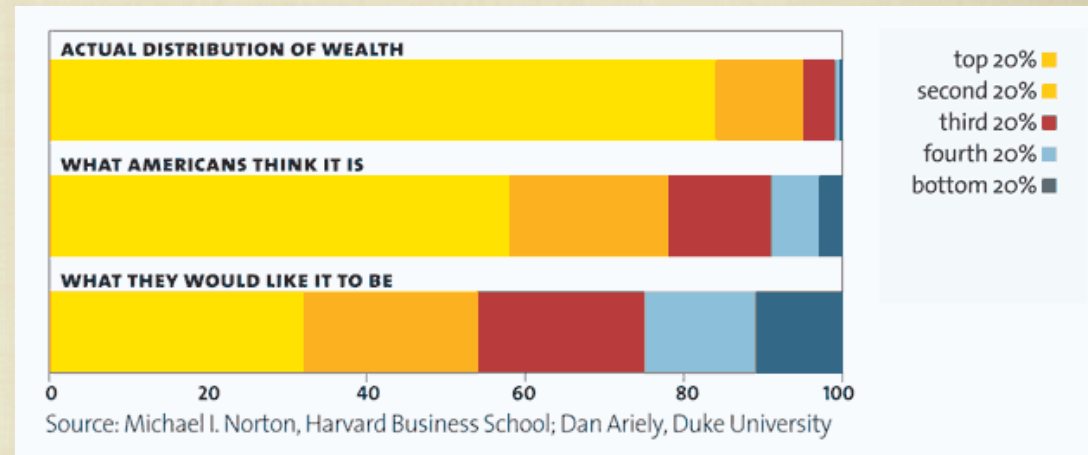
Social Class	Education	Occupation	Income	Percentage of Population
Capitalist	Prestige university	Investors and heirs, a few executives	\$500,000+	1%
Upper Middle	College or university, often with postgraduate study	Professionals and upper managers	\$90,000+	14%
Lower Middle	At least high school; perhaps some college or apprenticeship	Semiprofessionals and lower managers, craftspeople, foremen	About \$40,000	30%
Working Class	High school	Factory workers, clerical workers, retail sales, low-paid craftspeople	About \$30,000	30%
Working Poor	Some high school	Laborers, service workers, low-paid salespeople	About \$18,000	22%
Underclass	Some high school	Unemployed and part-time, on welfare	About \$10,000	3%

Source: Based on Gilbert, Dennis, and Joseph A. Kahl. *The American Class Structure: A New Synthesis*. 4th ed. Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1993. Income estimates follow Duff, Christina. "Profiling the Aged: Fat Cats or Hungry Victims?" *Wall Street Journal*, September 28, 1995a: B1, B8.



# WEALTH IN AMERICA

- THE MAIN WAY IN WHICH WE DETERMINE SOCIAL CLASS IN THE US IN WEALTH
- $\text{WEALTH} = \text{PROPERTY} + \text{INCOME}$
- PRESTIGE COMES FROM OCCUPATION
- WEALTH IS NOT JUST INCOME



THREE COMPONENTS/  
DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL  
CLASS

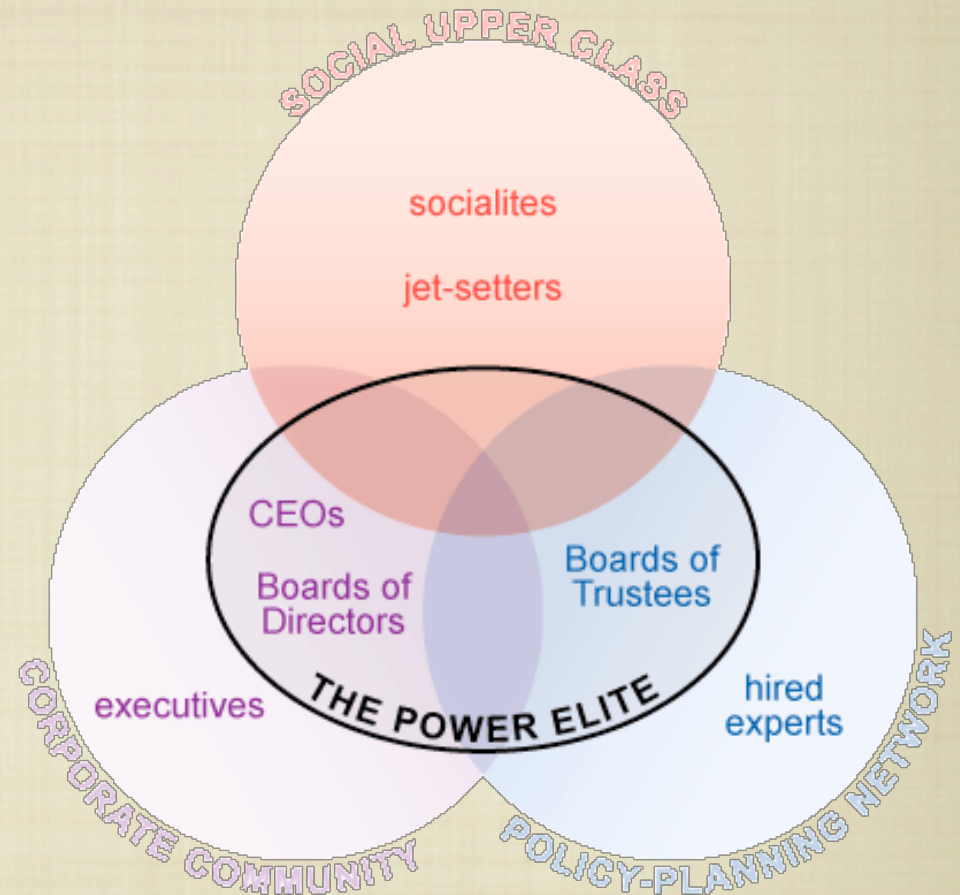
# 1. PROPERTY

- PROPERTY - MATERIAL POSSESSIONS, BUILDINGS, LAND, ANIMALS, MACHINERY, CARS, STOCKS, BONDS, BUSINESSES, FURNITURE, AND BANK ACCOUNTS.
- WEALTH - WHEN YOU ADD UP THE VALUE OF SOMEONE'S PROPERTY MINUS THE PERSON'S DEBT = PERSON'S NET WORTH
- INCOME - MONEY RECEIVED, USUALLY FROM A JOB, BUSINESS, OR ASSETS



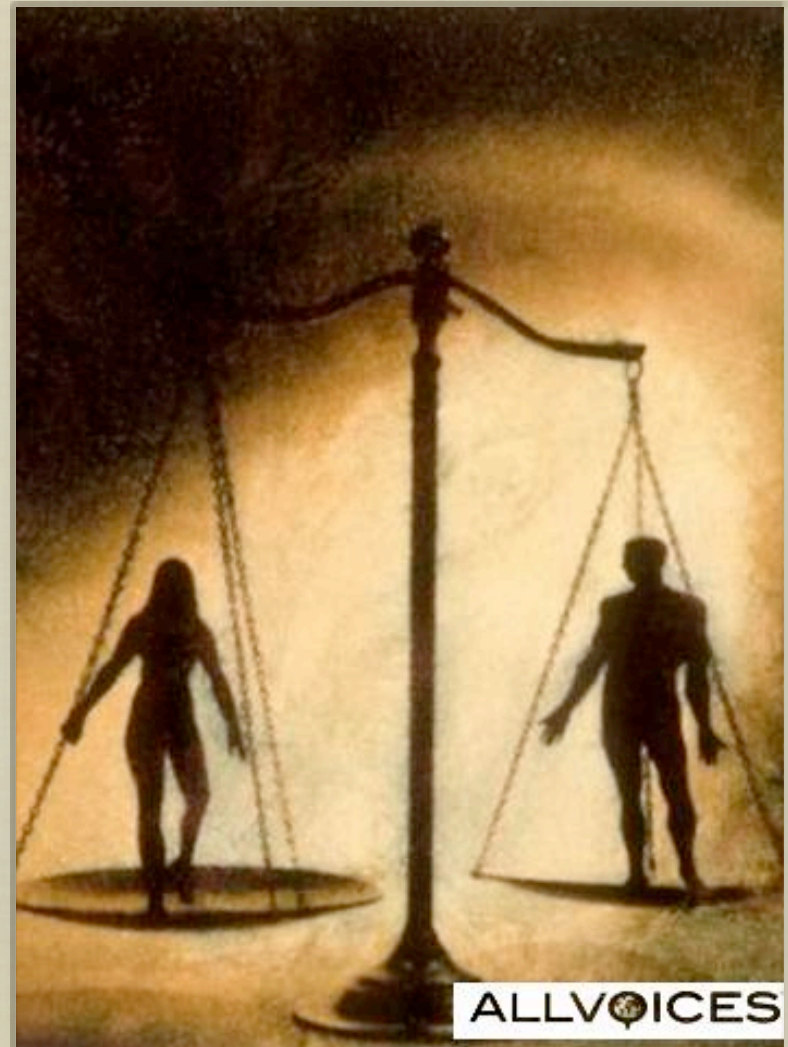
## 2. POWER

- **POWER**: THE ABILITY CARRY OUT YOUR GOALS, BEHAVIOR OR INFLUENCE WITHOUT CONSEQUENCES
- **POWER ELITE**: TERM USED BY C. WRIGHT MILLS FOR THOSE WHO MAKE THE MAJOR DECISION IN AMERICAN SOCIETY



# STATUS IN SOCIETY IS RELATED TO POWER

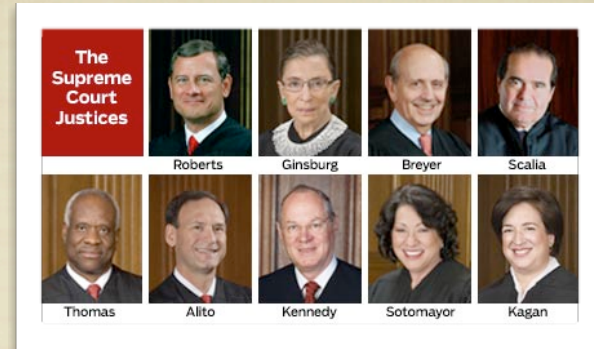
- THE RELATIVE POSITION YOU OCCUPY IN SOCIETY OR SPECIFIC GROUP
- CAN BE BASED ON PRESTIGE (RESPECT + REPUTATION) ON A NUMBER OF AREAS
- PEOPLE MAY HAVE DIFFERENT STATUSES: (OPRAH: WEALTHY, BLACK, WOMAN, ADULT, ENTERTAINER)





# 3. PRESTIGE

- PRESTIGE: RESPECT OR REGARD
- PRESTIGE & JOBS:
  1. THEY PAY MORE
  2. THEY REQUIRE MORE EDUCATION
  3. THEY ENTAIL MORE ABSTRACT THOUGHT
  4. THEY OFFER GREATER INDEPENDENT OR SELF-DIRECTION (AUTONOMY)



PRESTIGE IS  
OFTEN DISPLAYED





**TABLE 8-3 The Relative Social Prestige of Selected Occupations in the United States**

White-Collar Occupations	Prestige Score	Blue-Collar Occupations	White-Collar Occupations	Prestige Score	Blue-Collar Occupations
Physician	86		Funeral director	49	
Lawyer	75		Realtor	49	
College/university professor	74		Bookkeeper	47	
Architect	73			47	Machinist
Chemist	73			47	Mail carrier
Physicist/astronomer	73		Musician/composer	47	
Aerospace engineer	72			46	Secretary
Dentist	72		Photographer	45	
Member of the clergy	69		Bank teller	43	
Psychologist	69			42	Tailor
Pharmacist	68			42	Welder
Optometrist	67			40	Farmer
Registered nurse	66			40	Telephone operator
Secondary-school teacher	66			39	Carpenter
Accountant	65			36	Brick/stone mason
Athlete	65			36	Child-care worker
Electrical engineer	64		File clerk	36	
Elementary-school teacher	64			36	Hairdresser
Economist	63			35	Baker
Veterinarian	62			34	Bulldozer operator
Airplane pilot	61			31	Auto body repairperson
Computer programmer	61		Retail apparel salesperson	30	
Sociologist	61			30	Truck driver
Editor/reporter	60		Cashier	29	
	60	Police officer		28	Elevator operator
Actor	58			28	Garbage collector
Radio/TV announcer	55			28	Taxi driver
Librarian	54			28	Waiter/waitress
	53	Aircraft mechanic		27	Bellhop
	53	Firefighter		25	Bartender
Dental hygienist	52			23	Farm laborer
Painter/sculptor	52			23	Household laborer
Social worker	52			22	Door-to-door salesperson
	51	Electrician		22	Janitor
Computer operator	50			09	Shoe shiner

Source: Adapted from *General Social Surveys 1972-2000: Cumulative Codebook* (Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, 2001), pp. 1391-1409.



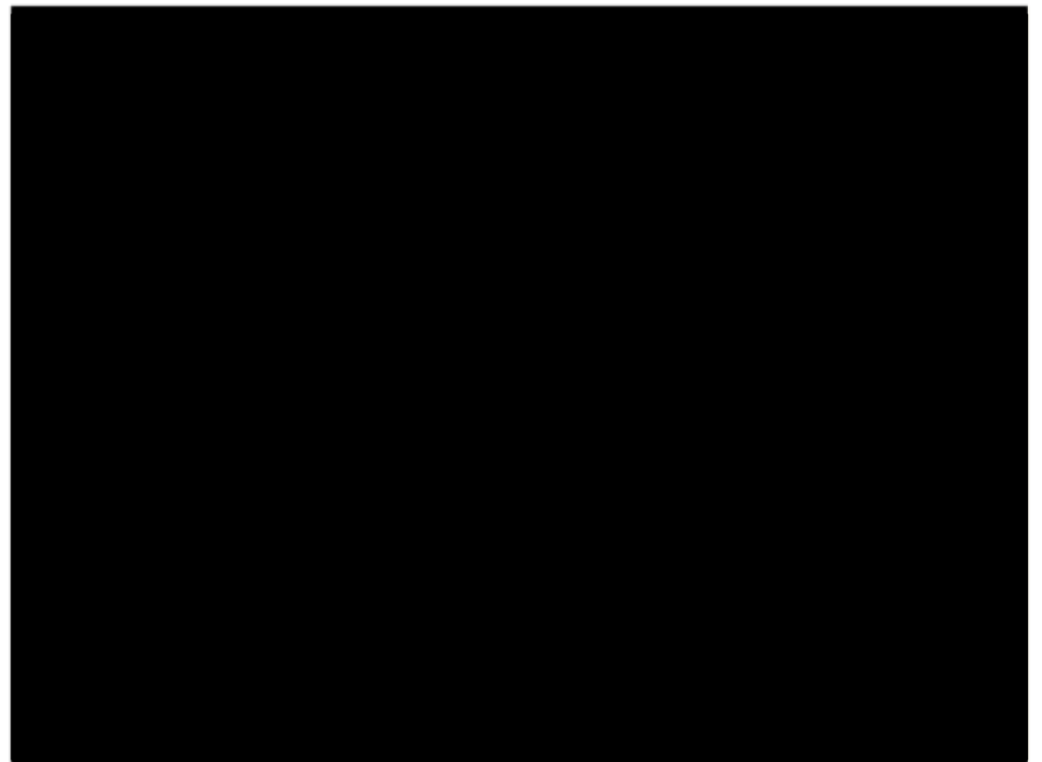
# STATUS APPLICATIONS

- STATUS SYMBOL: SYMBOLS USED TO SHOW YOUR STATUS AND PRESTIGE IN SOCIETY
- STATUS INCONSISTENCY: A CONTRADICTION BETWEEN TWO OR MORE OF YOUR STATUSES
- STATUS CONSISTENT: RANKING HIGH OR LOW ON ALL THREE DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL CLASS
- WHEN A STATUS INCONSISTENCY OCCUR, YOU WILL ALWAYS PUT YOURSELF IN THE HIGHER STATUS, OTHERS IN THE LOWER



# SOCIAL MOBILITY

- UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY - MOVEMENT UP THE SOCIAL CLASS LADDER
- DOWNWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY - MOVEMENT DOWN THE SOCIAL CLASS LADDER





# SOCIAL MOBILITY - 3 TYPES

1. INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY - CHANGE THAT FAMILY MEMBERS MAKE IN SOCIAL CLASS FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT
2. STRUCTURAL MOBILITY - MOVEMENT UP OR DOWN THE SOCIAL CLASS LADDER BECAUSE OF CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY - NOT TO INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS (COMPUTERS INVENTED = NEW JOBS)
3. EXCHANGE MOBILITY - ABOUT THE SAME NUMBERS OF PEOPLE HAVE MOVING UP AND DOWN THE SOCIAL CLASS LADDER, SUCH THAT, ON BALANCE, THE SOCIAL CLASS SYSTEM SHOWS LITTLE CHANGE (PEOPLE TRAINED IN A NEW TECHNOLOGY MOVE UP AND OTHER MOVE DOWN DUE TO OUTSOURCING)

# SOCIAL MOBILITY - WOMEN

- TODAY LARGE NUMBERS OF WOMEN WORK & FINDINGS SHOW THAT PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO GAIN AN EDUCATION LEAD TO ENTRANCE INTO THE UPPER MIDDLE CLASS.





# SOCIAL CLASS - PAIN

- MOVING DOWN IS UNDERSTANDABLY PAINFUL
- MOVING UP CAN BE DIFFICULT AS WELL - RELATIONSHIPS CAN BE STRAINED WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS
- SOME NEVER BECOME COMFORTABLE WITH THEIR NEW SOCIAL STATUS





# POVERTY - MYTH OR FACT

1. MOST POOR PEOPLE ARE LAZY. THEY ARE POOR BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT TO WORK.

**WRONG!**

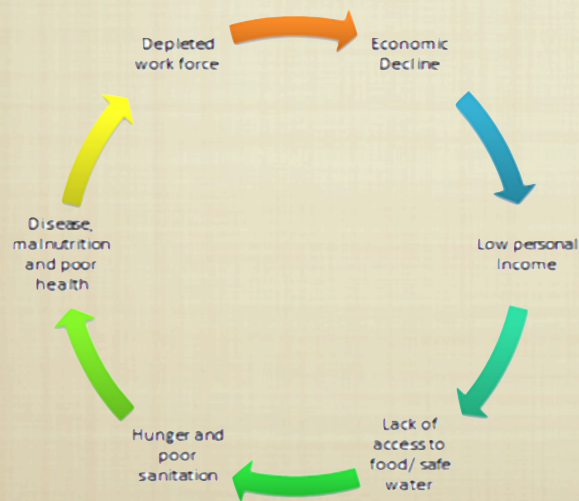


HALF OF THE POOR ARE TOO OLD OR TOO YOUNG & ABOUT 30% WORK PART OF THE YEAR!

# POVERTY - MYTH OR FACT

2. PEOPLE ARE TRAPPED IN A CYCLE OF POVERTY THAT FEW ESCAPE.

## THE POVERTY CYCLE



LONG-TERM IS RARE. MOST POVERTY LASTS LESS THAN A YEAR. 12% REMAIN IN POVERTY FOR 5 CONSECUTIVE YEARS



# POVERTY - MYTH OR FACT

3. ~~MYTH~~ MOST OF THE POOR ARE AFRICAN AMERICANS OR LATINOS



RATES ARE HIGHER, BUT  
SINCE WHITES CONSTITUTE  
MORE PEOPLE IN THE U.S.,  
MOST ARE WHITE = 37  
MILLION TOTAL AND 57% OF  
THEM ARE WHITE.



# POVERTY - MYTH OR FACT

4. MOST OF THE POOR ARE  
SINGLE MOTHERS AND THEIR  
CHILDREN



38% MATCH THE ABOVE  
STEREOTYPE - 34% ARE  
MARRIED-COUPLE FAMILIES -  
22% LIVE ALONE & 6% ARE  
IN OTHER SETTINGS

# POVERTY - MYTH OR FACT

5. MOST OF THE POOR LIVE IN  
THE INNER CITY.

**MYTH**



CLOSE TO TRUTH - 42% LIVE  
IN THE INNER CITY - 36% IN  
THE SUBURBS AND 22% IN  
SMALL TOWNS OR RURAL  
AREAS



# POVERTY - MYTH OR FACT

## 6. THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE ON WELFARE

**MYTH**



ONLY ABOUT 25% OF INCOME  
COMES FROM WELFARE - 50%  
FROM WAGES AND PENSION -  
22% FROM SOCIAL SECURITY

# POVERTY

- POVERTY LINE - THE OFFICIAL MEASURE OF POVERTY; CALCULATED TO INCLUDE INCOMES THAT ARE LESS THAN THREE TIMES A LOW-COST FOOD BUDGET
- DEVELOPED IN THE 1960s
- TODAY MOST SPEND 20% ON FOOD - MULTIPLIER SHOULD BE 5 NOT 3
- NO POLITICAL PARTY WANTS TO MAKE THE CHANGE AND HAVE THE INCREASE ON THEIR WATCH
- THE SAME FOR THOSE IN NY AND ALABAMA (COST OF LIVING THE SAME?)

**2012 Poverty Guidelines for the  
48 Contiguous States and the District of  
Columbia**

Persons in family/household	Poverty guideline
1	\$11,170
2	15,130
3	19,090
4	23,050
5	27,010
6	30,970
7	34,930
8	38,890

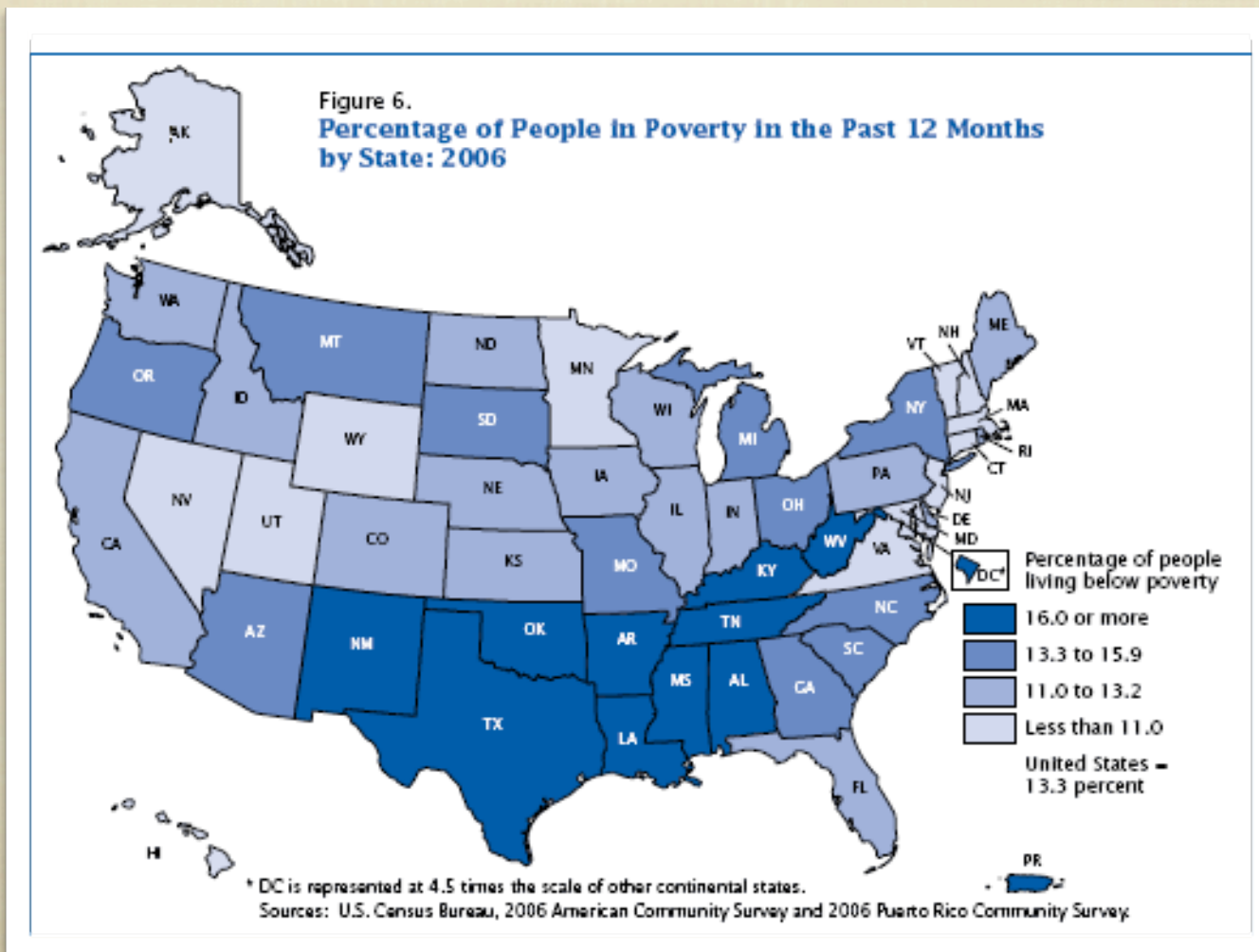
For families/households with more than 8 persons,  
add \$3,960 for each additional person.





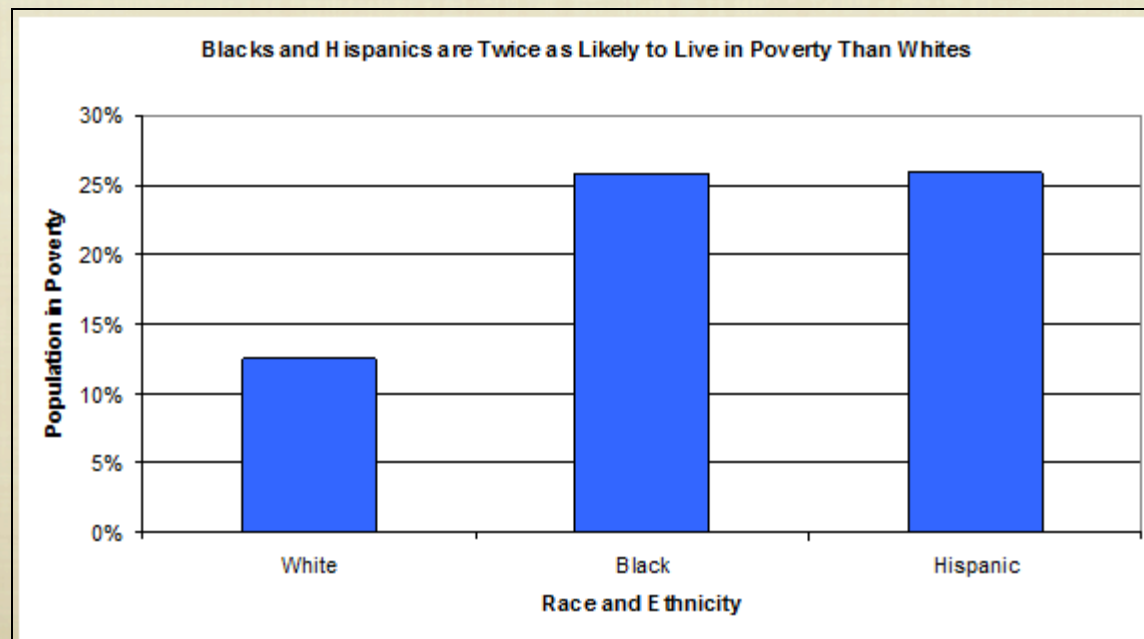
# WHO ARE POOR?

- **GEOGRAPHY:** POOR ARE NOT EVENLY DISTRIBUTED (MORE IN THE SOUTH)& RURAL POOR EXIST AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE MARRIED AND LESS EDUCATED THAN URBAN POOR.



# WHO ARE POOR?

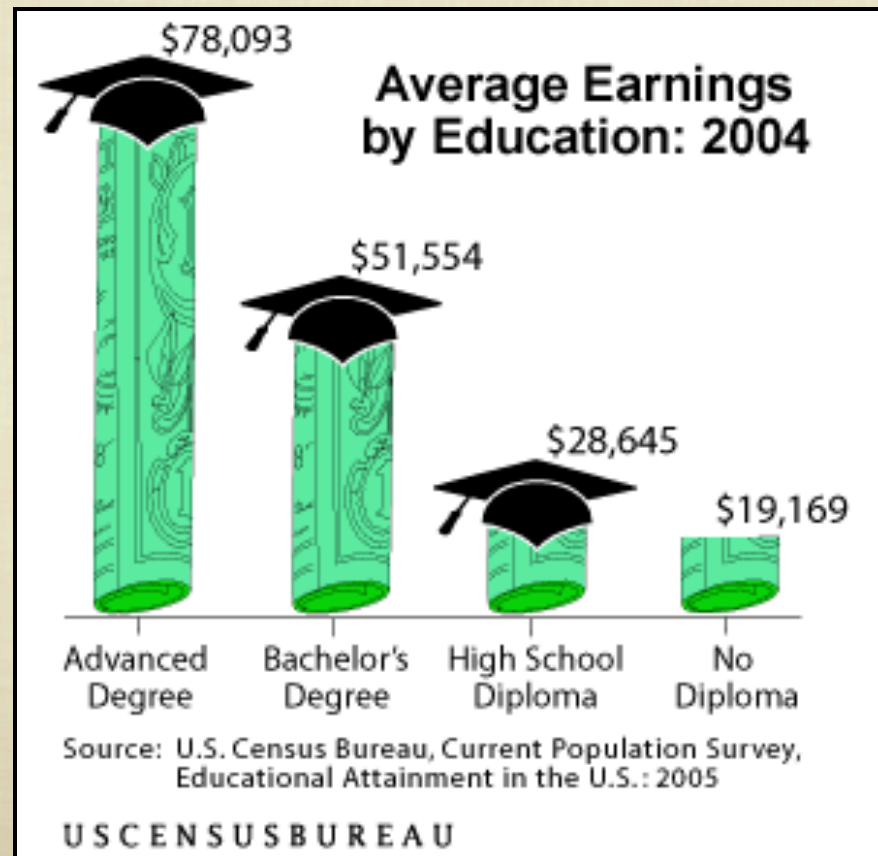
- **RACE-ETHNICITY**: 10% OF ASIANS AND 11% OF WHITES ARE POOR, BUT 22% OF LATINOS AND 25% OF AFRICAN AMERICANS ARE POOR
- **STEREOTYPE** - MOST POOR ARE AFRICAN AMERICANS OR LATINOS IS NOT TRUE - MOST ARE WHITE (MORE BY POPULATION)





# WHO ARE POOR?

- **EDUCATION**: VITAL FACTOR - 3/100 WHO FINISH COLLEGE END UP IN POVERTY BUT 1/4 WHO DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL IS POOR



# WHO ARE POOR?

- **FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY**: FAMILIES HEADED BY ONLY A FATHER OR MOTHER ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE POOR AND MOST COMMON FOR MOTHER-HEADED FAMILIES.
- WOMEN WHO HEAD FAMILIES EARN 70% OF THE INCOME OF FAMILIES HEADED BY A MAN
- DIVORCE AND HIGH NUMBER OF BIRTHS TO SINGLE MOTHERS HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE FEMINIZATION





# WHO ARE POOR?

- **OLD AGE**: ELDERLY ARE LESS LIKELY TODAY TO BE POOR.
- GOVERNMENT REDISTRIBUTION OF INCOME (SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICAL CARE, ETC...)
- ETHNICITY & RACE MAKES A DIFFERENT - AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LATINO ELDERLY ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE POOR.





# WHO ARE POOR?

- **CHILDREN**: THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO LIVE IN POVERTY THAN ARE ADULTS OR THE ELDERLY AND IS REGARDLESS OF RACE-ETHNICITY (IT IS GREATER FOR LATINO AND AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN)





# CULTURE OF POVERTY

- **CULTURE OF POVERTY** - ASSUMPTION THAT THE VALUES AND BEHAVIORS OF THE POOR MAKE THEM DIFFERENT FROM THE REST OF AMERICA AND THESE FACTORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR LONG-TERM POVERTY.
- **REALITY**- MOST POVERTY IS SHORT-LIVED (LASTING A YEAR OR LESS) AND IS SPARKED BY A DRAMATIC LIFE CHANGE (DIVORCE, JOB LOSS OR THE BIRTH OF A CHILD). ONLY 12% LASTS 5 YEARS OR LONGER



# WHY ARE PEOPLE POOR?

## ■ TWO EXPLANATIONS:

1. **SOCIAL STRUCTURE** - FEATURES OF SOCIETY DENY SOME PEOPLE ACCESS TO EDUCATION OR JOB SKILLS. DISCRIMINATION, PLANT CLOSINGS, RACISM ALL MAY MAKE ESCAPE DIFFICULT.
2. **CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS** - LAZINESS OR LACK OF INTELLIGENCE IS REJECTED BY SOCIOLOGISTS - INSTEAD THEY LOOK AT DROPPING OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL, PREGNANCY DURING TEEN YEARS. SOCIOLOGIST WORK HARD NOT TO BLAME THE VICTIM.



# WELFARE OR NOT...YOU DECIDE

**SCENARIO #1 - NANCY AND  
TED LEWIS ARE IN THEIR  
EARLY 30S AND HAVE TWO  
CHILDREN. TED WORKS  
THREE PART-TIME JOBS,  
EARNING \$13,000 A YEAR;  
NANCY TAKES CARE OF THE  
CHILDREN AND HOUSE AND  
IS NOT EMPLOYED.**

**SHOULD THEY GET  
WELFARE?**



# WELFARE OR NOT...YOU DECIDE

**SCENARIO #2 - JOAN'S FAMILY HAS A HISTORY OF BEING ON WELFARE. JOAN HAD HER FIRST CHILD AT 15, NOW AT AGE 23 SHE IS PREGNANT WITH HER FOURTH. HER CHILDREN HAVE THREE DIFFERENT FATHERS AND JOAN HAS STRUGGLED WITH DRUG/ALCOHOL ADDICTION AND HAS FACED THREATS OF HAVING HER CHILDREN REMOVED FROM HER CUSTODY**

**SHOULD THEY GET WELFARE?**





# WELFARE DEBATE???



## ■ ARE THEY?

■ DESERVING POOR - IN THE PUBLIC MIND THEY ARE POOR BUT IT IS NOT THEIR FAULT

■ UNDESERVING POOR - VIEWED BY SOCIETY AS POOR BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN FAULT. DRUG/ALCOHOL ABUSES, LAZY, DROPOUTS, PROMISCUOUS, ETC...

■ WELFARE REFORM - 1996 WELFARE WAS RESTRUCTURED AND STATES ARE REQUIRED TO PUT A CAP ON LIFETIME ASSISTANCE, REQUIRES THEM TO LOOK FOR WORK AND TAKE JOBS, AND ALLOWS THE MAXIMUM TO BE 5 YEARS.

# LIFE OF POVERTY

- **DEFERRED GRATIFICATION** -  
WITH NO HOPE FOR A BRIGHTER  
FUTURE - MANY POOR DO NOT  
GIVE UP THINGS IN THE  
PRESENT FOR THE SAKE OF  
GAINS IN THE FUTURE.
- DEFERRED GRATIFICATION IS A  
MIDDLE CLASS VALUE
- SOCIOLOGISTS DO NOT VIEW  
THIS AS A CAUSE OF POVERTY,  
BUT RATHER A RESULT





# HORATIO ALGER MYTH

- 1800S POPULAR AUTHOR WHO PROMOTED THE RAGS-TO-RICHES IDEA THAT IS STILL ALIVE TODAY!
- MYTH: WE THINK THAT LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES EXIST & IT ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO COMPETE FOR HIGHER PLACES
- IMPACT: IT BLAMES THE INDIVIDUAL FOR FAILURE - DEFLECTS THE BLAME FROM SOCIETY - FAULT IS INDIVIDUALS NOT SOCIETIES SO CURRENT SOCIAL ARRANGEMENTS ARE SEEN AS SATISFACTORY

